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12 March 1960

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Copy No. C 68

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 11
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: T3 S 0
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: MR 78-2
DATE: 6 JUN 1980
REVIEWER:

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State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2002/09/04 : CIA-RDP79T00975A005000110001-3

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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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South Vietnam: Incidents of Communist terrorist activity in the southern provinces continue to be widespread, and are eroding popular confidence in the government's ability to maintain security in the affected areas. [redacted]

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Burma: General Ne Win, the outgoing premier, has postponed his visit to the United States for medical treatment. Ne Win feels his presence in Burma is necessary to ensure the smooth transfer of government and has expressed strong reservations about the incoming government of former Premier U Nu. He has served notice on U Nu that he would seize control again if conditions required it. [redacted]

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III. THE WEST

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France: Agricultural interests, increasingly angry over farm prices, are trying to press De Gaulle into a special session of parliament which might prove an embarrassing accompaniment to the Khrushchev visit. They claim to have 260 of

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the 277 deputies' signatures necessary to call such a session. The US Embassy believes that a De Gaulle refusal to agree to the deputies' petition would strengthen antigovernment extremists, who last month used a farmer demonstration to precipitate violence.

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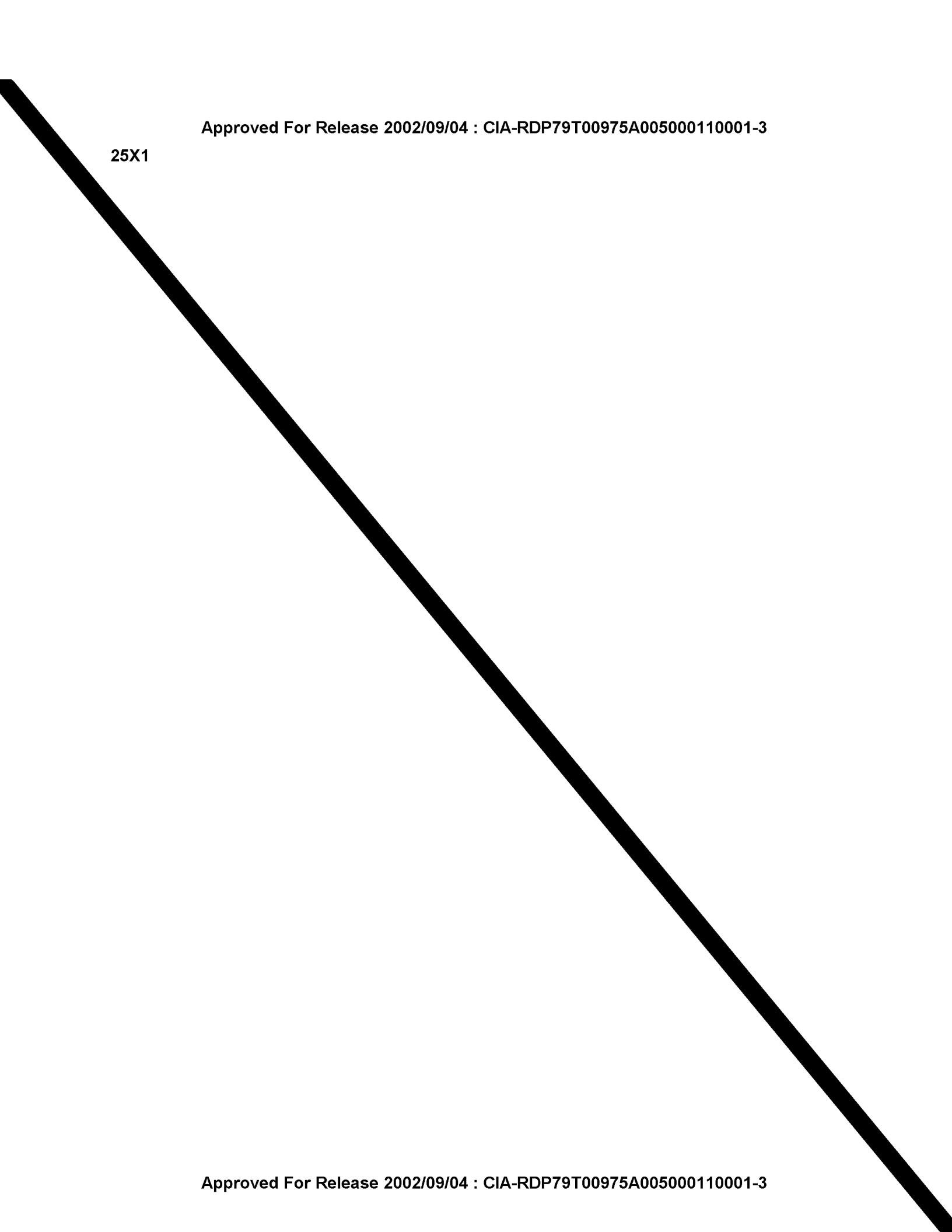
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DAILY BRIEF

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Communist Terrorism in South Vietnam Intensifies

The growing aggressiveness of the estimated 3,000 Vietnamese Communist guerrillas in South Vietnam is highlighted by recent attacks in the vicinity of Saigon. On 7 March a well-armed Communist band of about 200 men and women pillaged a hospital about 15 miles north of Saigon, making off with medicine, money, and equipment. The Communists harangued the staff on how the Diem government and the Americans were "ruining the country." [Earlier in March, twenty Communists, in a daylight assault on a militia post about six miles southwest of Saigon, killed three men and took eighteen rifles.]

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These incidents are symptomatic of the marked deterioration in security of southern and southwestern provinces, particularly since a successful raid by about 300 Communists on a regimental cantonment last January. Vietnamese security forces have had several stiff encounters in recent weeks with sizable guerrilla forces. The increase in ambushes and attacks against government patrols and security posts, assassinations of local officials and villagers, and sabotage [tends to support South Vietnamese estimates that the Communists intend to eliminate Saigon's control over the countryside in these provinces.] [President Diem apparently is convinced that the Communists have opened "all-out guerrilla war."] There are reports of possible additional infiltration, by land and sea, of Communist guerrillas from North Vietnam.

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[Unless the government can check Communist terrorism, the loyalty of the local population--already strained by high-handed behavior of provincial officials--will be further eroded, opening the way to the extensive control of the countryside which the Communists exerted under French rule.]

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Retiring Premier Fears for Burma's Future

[General Ne Win, who is to turn the government of Burma back to U Nu in April, has postponed for several months a planned visit to the United States for medical treatment. He feels that his personal supervision is necessary to ensure the smooth transfer of government and has expressed serious reservations over Burma's prospects under his successor. Ne Win ousted Nu in October 1958 to halt Burma's drift toward economic chaos and civil war.]

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[Ne Win considers Burma's political leaders inept or corrupt. He had hoped that the February elections would produce two balanced parties in parliament instead of the landslide victory for Nu's following. Since the elections he has felt it necessary to warn Nu bluntly that to forestall a return to the chaotic conditions of 1958 he is prepared to seize control of the government again. During Soviet Premier Khrushchev's recent visit to Rangoon, he declined an invitation to visit Moscow, saying, "At present I am busy preparing for a change of government; after that I will be too occupied to visit Moscow."]

[General Ne Win apparently feels that U Nu personally may be Burma's most serious problem in the immediate future. In a conversation with Ambassador Snow, he recently described Nu as a 'very dangerous man... not entirely sane--loose and vague at times mentally... shrewd and calculating... petulant and changeable... quite willing to play one person or country off against another.' He feels that Nu may have difficulty in forming an adequate government because of the paucity of able men in his party.]

[General Ne Win clearly believes that the future stability and growth of Burma will be dependent upon control and supervision of politicians by the army. He hopes to exercise that supervision, however, without direct participation in the government.]

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III. THE WEST

French Farmers Pressing De Gaulle for Special Parliamentary Session

French agricultural interests, increasingly angry over declining farm prices and the government's continuing refusal to reinstate a price system tied to the cost-of-living index, now claim to have 260 of the 277 deputies' signatures necessary to call a special session of the French parliament before the scheduled opening on 26 April. Farmer discontent has already led to a number of demonstrations, including the Amiens riot in February which was exploited by rightist opponents of De Gaulle's Algerian policy. The farmers apparently hope to extract concessions at a time when, in view of Khrushchev's impending arrival, the government presumably is anxious to avoid any display of parliamentary hostility.

The government objects that farmer demands are inflationary and would lead to a new round of price increases and wage demands. It seeks to mollify the farmers with a bill providing for increased government assistance in agricultural modernization, education, marketing, and distribution. It insists, however, that farm commodity prices must be related to farm costs, instead of to the cost-of-living index. Premier Debré is trying to accelerate drafting of the government bill to permit early consideration by the agricultural committee in parliament, and he may try to get agreement for a special session of parliament to convene a few days before 26 April.

The embassy believes that if De Gaulle, as Debré has hinted, refuses to act on the deputies' petition for a special session, a dangerous breach between the government and assembly will result and mass farmer agitation will be renewed. Rightists who oppose De Gaulle's invitation to Khrushchev see farm discontent as a vehicle for embarrassing the President. Moreover, left and center parties, who believe De Gaulle's recent tough statements on Algeria indicate a backward step from a liberal settlement, may view a special session of parliament as an opportunity to attack the government on Algerian policy.

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